May 11, 2012

Alberta Economy

indicators at a glance

Real Gross Domestic Product (GDP), by Industry

In 2011, Alberta's real GDP by industry advanced 5.2%, the strongest growth among the provinces and the largest gain since 2006. GDP growth was 3.3% in 2010. Nationally, real GDP rose 2.6% in 2011, lower than the 3.4% recorded in 2010.

Population

As of January 1, 2012, Alberta's population was estimated at 3,817,980, a 2.0% increase from a year earlier. Nationally, population grew 1.1% from a year earlier to 34,670,352.

Migration

In the fourth quarter of 2011, Alberta had net interprovincial migration of 6,010 people and net international migration of 6,297 people.

NEW: Employment [1]

Alberta gained 10,700 jobs (0.5%) in April and was up 3.9% compared to the same month last year. Nationally, employment grew 58,200 in April and was up 1.2% year-over-year.

NEW: Unemployment [1]

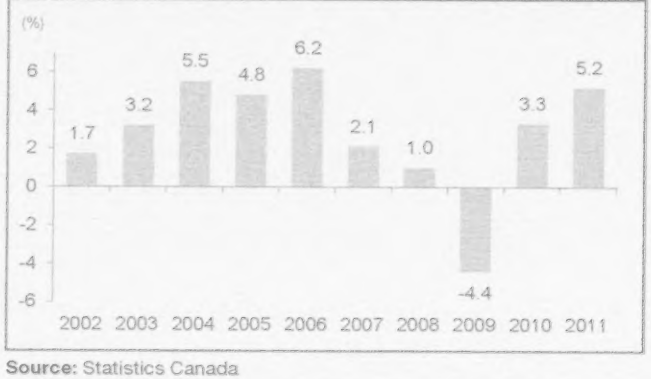
The unemployment rate dropped 0.4 percentage points to 4.9% in April, tying Alberta with Saskatchewan for lowest rate among the provinces. Nationally, the unemployment rate increased from 7.2% to 7.3% in April.

Rigs Drilling

The average number of rigs drilling in Alberta was 141 in April, down 58.3% from the prior month. Year-over-year, drilling activity remained strong, up 14.4% from April 2011.

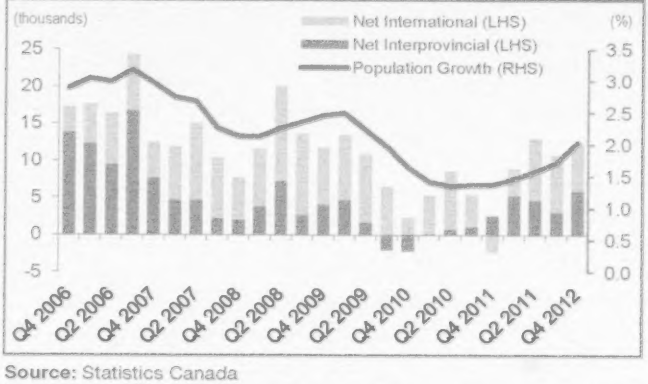
[1] Seasonally adjusted

Real GDP by Industry
(Annual, year-over-year % change)



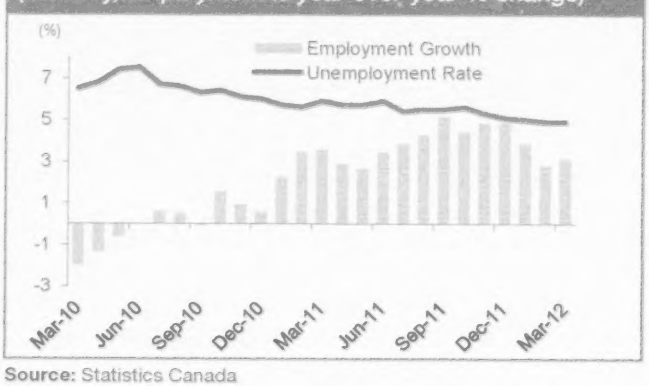
Source: Statistics Canada

Demographics
(Quarterly, population is year-over-year % change)



Source: Statistics Canada

Labour Market
(Monthly, employment is year-over-year % change)



Source: Statistics Canada

Economics, Demography and Public Finance

Inflation[1]

Alberta's year-over-year CPI inflation rate dropped to 1.7% in March 2012 from 1.9% a month earlier. Nationally, the inflation rate was 1.9% in March, down from 2.6% in February.

Average Weekly Earnings[1]

In February, average weekly earnings in Alberta were the highest in the country at $1,057.57. This was an increase of 0.1% from January and 2.7% higher than a year earlier. Nationally, average weekly earnings were $886.45, up 1.8% from February 2011.

Retail Trade[1]

Alberta retail sales slipped 0.6% to $5.61 billion in February, but jumped 9.1% from the same month a year ago. Nationally, February retail sales dipped 0.2% from the prior month.

NEW: Housing Starts

Housing starts in Alberta rose 5.1% in April to a seasonally adjusted annual rate (SAAR) of 37,300 units. Nationally, housing starts increased 14% in April to 244,900 (SAAR).

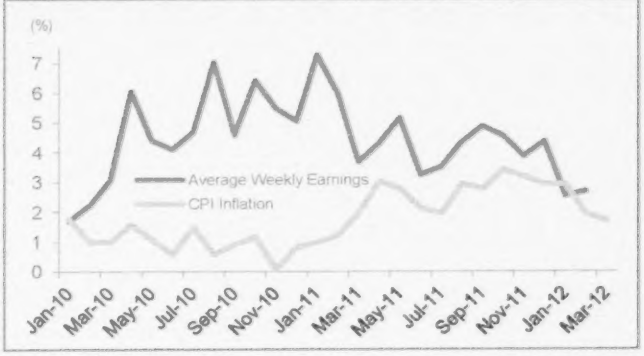
NEW: New House Price Index (NHPI)[1]

The new house price index in Alberta increased slightly to 93.2 in March. Compared to the same month last year, new house prices in Alberta were 0.8% higher. Nationally, the index was 2.6% higher than a year ago.

NEW: Building Permits[1]

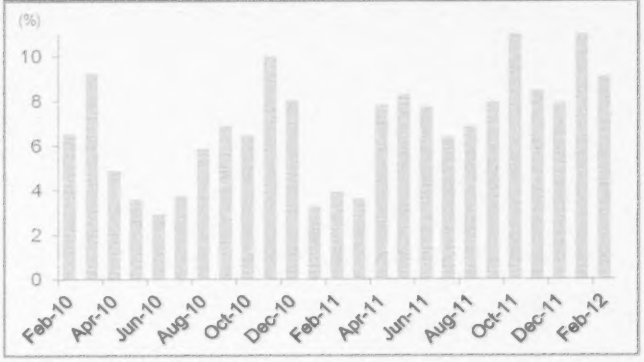
The value of building permits in Alberta jumped 5.6% in March to $1.2 billion. This was due to increases in both the residential (6.8%) and the non-residential (3.9%) sectors. Strong growth of 37.5% over March 2011 points to a pickup in construction activities in the province.

Inflation and Earnings
(Monthly, CPI and AWE are year-over-year % change)



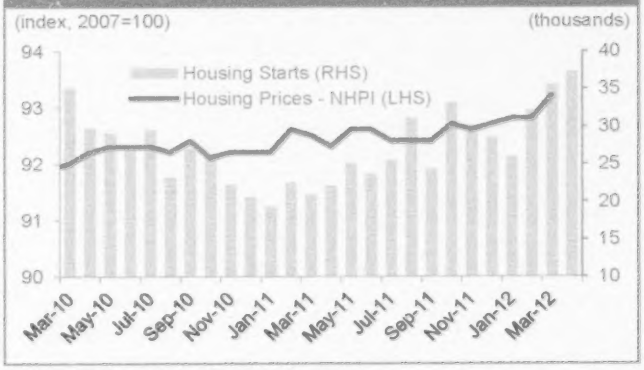
Source: Statistics Canada

Retail Sales
(Monthly, year-over-year % change)



Source: Statistics Canada

Housing Market
(Monthly)



Source: CMHC and Statistics Canada

	2011–12 Actual	2012–13 YTD	Latest
WTI Oil ($US/bbl)	$97.19	$102.43	$97.08
Natural Gas (ARP, $C/GJ)	$3.09 (Apr-Feb)	N/A	$2.13 (February)